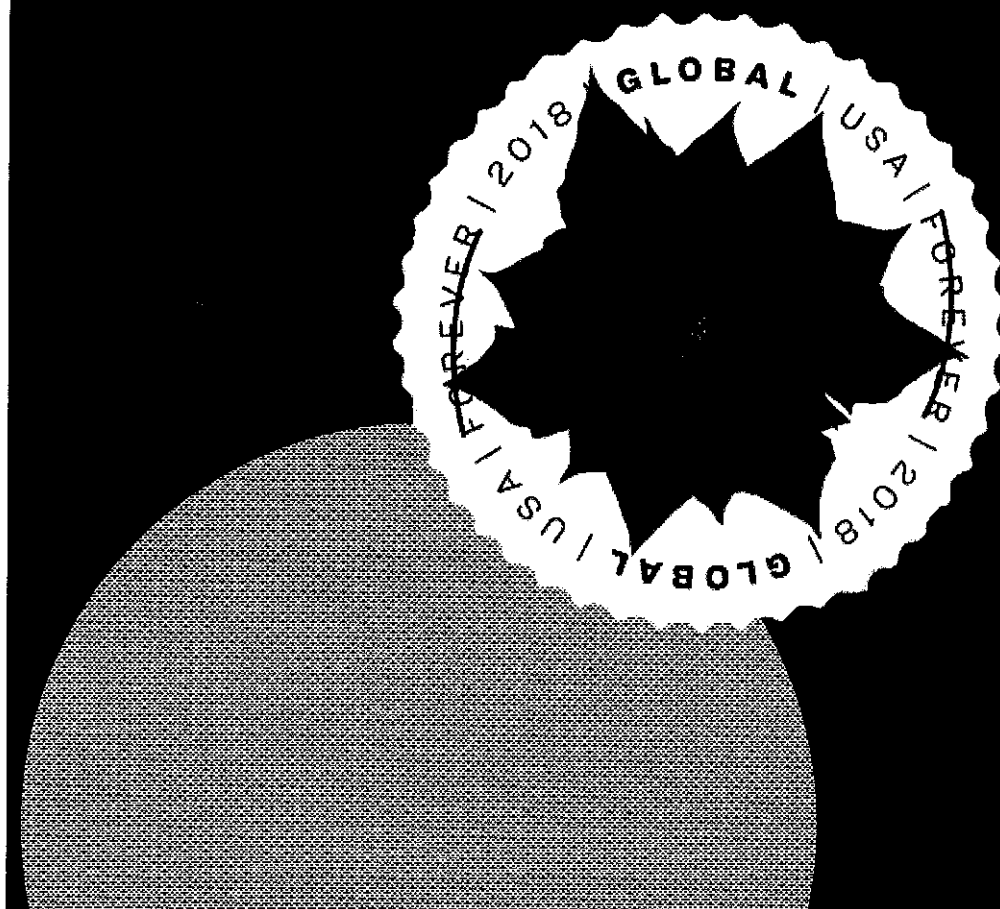


Avoid the holiday rush  
this season... buy your stamps  
from *home!*



The Postal Service has a wide variety of contemporary and religious stamps offered this season, and they're all available for purchase online or at a retail partner near you.

Go to [usps.com](https://usps.com) to find holiday stamps and other festive items to make the perfect impression this season.

# Shipping and Mailing

## Tips to Avoid a Shipping Glitch

- **Select a durable box** to protect the contents. Priority Mail and Priority Mail Express boxes are free at local Post Offices
- **Do NOT reuse boxes** — they weaken in the shipping process
- **Properly address packages.** Include both “to” and “from” information and only on one side
- **Print addresses clearly** and include all address elements, such as apartment numbers and directional information (ex: 123 S Main St. Apt. 2B)
- **Never guess a ZIP Code.** Look up a ZIP Code at [usps.com](https://usps.com) under Quick Tools. NO ZIP is better than a WRONG ZIP
- **Place a card inside the package with delivery and return addresses.** This helps postal employees deliver the item should the mailing label become damaged or fall off
- **Pay attention to batteries.** In general, batteries should be securely packaged in the manufacturer’s original packaging. Items shipped with batteries installed that cause ticking, vibrations or other noises during transportation can be delayed due to security concerns. **Lithium batteries** are hazardous materials and are restricted by type, quantity and battery strength. Information about shipping batteries, including lithium batteries, is in Publication 52, Hazardous, Restricted and Perishable Mail, sec. 349.22,
- **Leave space for extra cushioning inside and stuff glass and fragile, hollow items, like vases, with newspaper** or packing material to avoid damage. When mailing framed photographs, take the glass out of the frame and wrap it separately

## Holiday Retail Hours

- This holiday season, retail hours will be expanded in select locations. Go to [usps.com/locator](https://usps.com/locator), and enter your ZIP Code for hours at a specific location
- Post Offices will be open Christmas Eve and New Year’s Eve. Some offices may close early. Check [usps.com/locator](https://usps.com/locator) for hours at specific offices
- All offices will be closed on Christmas Day and New Year’s Day. Priority Mail Express will be delivered.
- Post Offices will be open regular operating hours on Dec. 26 and Jan. 2

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# Shipping Features and Pricing

## Priority Mail

Priority Mail is the ultimate value in holiday shipping. Featuring flat rate pricing, free packaging, and free package pickup, Priority Mail offers superior shipping options at affordable pricing. Other benefits of Priority Mail include:

- No weighing or calculating needed up to 70 lbs.
- Flat Rate offers one rate to any state
- Delivery in 1 to 3 business days
- Free Package Pickup service at your home or office
- Includes USPS Tracking when you ship online and at retail
- Includes up to \$50 of insurance with most shipments
- No surcharges for fuel or residential, rural, and regular Saturday delivery

Product	Price
Small Flat Rate Box	\$7.40
Medium Flat Rate Box	\$14.35
Large Flat Rate Box	\$18.05
APO/FPO/DPO Flat Rate Box	\$18.45

## Priority Mail Express

Priority Mail Express is our fastest domestic service, available 365 days a year, with a money-back guarantee and delivery to most U.S. addresses, including P.O. Boxes. Except for Priority Mail Express Flat Rate envelopes, Priority Mail Express prices are based on weight and zone. Other benefits of Priority Mail Express include:

- Free Package Pickup service at your home or office
- Price includes proof of delivery signature record (if requested at time of purchase), and tracking information with USPS Tracking
- Includes up to \$100 of insurance with most shipments
- Overnight scheduled delivery by 10:30 am, or on a Sunday or holiday available in many major markets for an additional fee

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# Protect Mail and Packages

## Six Ways to Protect

1. **Don't leave delivered mail and packages unattended.** Just as wallets and purses shouldn't be left on the front seat of an unlocked car overnight, mail and packages shouldn't be left uncollected in mailboxes or on front porches for any length of time.
2. **Going out of town? Hold mail at a local Post Office.** Instead of risking leaving a package unattended for an extended period of time, customers planning on being away from home for a few days are encouraged to take advantage of the *Request Hold Mail* service. Letters and packages will be held securely at the customer's local Post Office until they return.
3. **Plan ahead. Ship using *Hold for Pickup*.** When shipping a package, customers can choose the *Hold for Pickup* option and the recipient can collect the packages at their local Post Office. For customers receiving packages, they can redirect incoming packages to their local Post Office by selecting *Hold for Pickup* using *USPS Package Intercept*.
4. **Sign up for Informed Delivery.** Customers can sign up for free at [informedelivery.com](http://informedelivery.com) to see what packages are en route and to receive daily emails showing what mail will be delivered. More than 20 million people have already signed up for Informed Delivery!
5. **Customize the delivery.** If the package doesn't fit in the mailbox and the customer won't be home to receive it, the customer can provide delivery instructions online and authorize the carrier to leave it in a specified location. Visit [usps.com](http://usps.com), enter the tracking number and select *Delivery Instructions*.
6. **Secure the shipment using USPS Special Services.** *Signature Confirmation* helps ensure the package ends up in the right hands by requiring a signature at the time of delivery. For the most valuable packages, customers can opt for *Registered Mail* service. *Registered Mail* receives special handling from the time it's mailed until it's delivered, documenting the chain of custody.

## Postal Blog – USPSBlog.com

- Helpful holiday content is added every Monday on USPSBlog.com through Dec. 30.

[usps.com/holidaynews](http://usps.com/holidaynews)

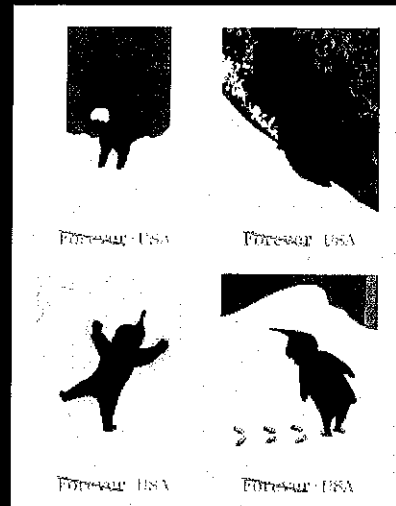
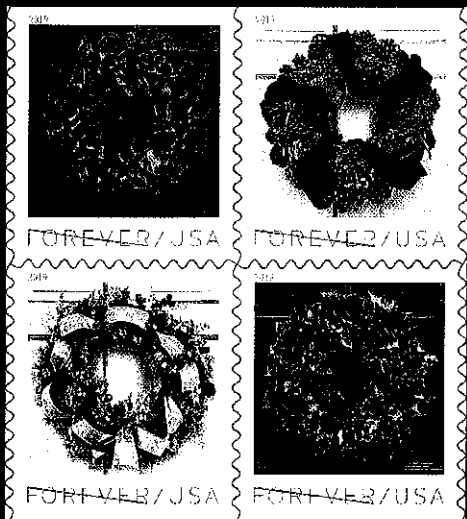
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# Stamps and National Postmark

## Stamps

The Postal Service has a wide-variety of seasonal stamps for the holidays:



## National Postmark

From Monday, Dec. 2 to Tuesday, Dec. 31, the Postal Service will postmark stamps with the following graphic:



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# Mail and Ship By Dates

## Domestic Mail-By Dates

December	Mail Classification
11 (Military)	APO/FPO/DPO Priority Mail and APO/FPO Flat Rate Box
14	Retail Ground
18 (Military)	APO/FPO/DPO Priority Mail Express
20	First-Class Mail
21	Priority Mail
23	Priority Mail Express

### Mail For the Troops

USPS is expecting to process more than 15.4 million pounds of mail for APO/FPO/DPO destinations this holiday season

To send packages to loved ones serving in the military abroad, the Postal Service offers a discount on its Priority Mail Large Flat Rate Box

The \$18.45 price includes a \$1.50 per box discount for mail sent to APO / FPO / DPO destinations worldwide

Priority Mail Flat Rate boxes are available at no cost at local Post Offices, or can be ordered online at [usps.com/freeboxes](https://usps.com/freeboxes)

Postage, labels and customs forms can be printed online anytime using Click-N-Ship at [usps.com/ship](https://usps.com/ship)

To help with timely delivery of holiday wishes by Dec. 25, cards and packages to military addresses overseas should be sent no later than:

- **Dec. 11** First-Class Mail and Priority Mail
- **Dec. 18** Priority Mail Express

The Postal Service is proud to employ more than 100,000 veterans and understands the importance of sending packages to military and diplomatic members serving abroad, especially during the holidays

## Skip the Trip and Ship Online

- Consumers don't have to leave home to ship their packages, they can simply visit [usps.com](https://usps.com)
- The Postal Service anticipates Dec. 16 will be the busiest day **online** with more than 8.5 million customers predicted to visit [usps.com](https://usps.com) for help shipping holiday packages
- It's estimated nearly 400,000 customers will use Click-N-Ship and other online services Dec. 16 to order free Priority Mail boxes, print shipping labels, purchase postage and even request free next-day Package Pickup from the mail carrier
- The Postal Service is predicting nearly 105 million customers will visit [usps.com](https://usps.com) between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day
- **And [usps.com](https://usps.com) is always open!**

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# Facts and Information

## Facts

The Postal Service expects holiday mail and package volumes to increase dramatically after Thanksgiving and continue increasing until Christmas – traditionally busiest mailing and delivery days may no longer apply.

- Busiest MAILING, SHIPPING and DELIVERY WEEK — Dec. 16-22
- Nearly 13 billion total pieces of mail and packages are expected to be processed and delivered this holiday season — Thanksgiving to New Year's Day
- The Postal Service is projecting more than 800 million packages will be delivered this holiday season. Nearly 200 million packages are expected to be delivered during the busiest week, and about the same the week prior
- More than 8 million packages are expected to be delivered each Sunday during the holiday season, beginning Nov. 24
- Nearly 2.5 billion pieces of mail, including greeting cards and packages, are expected to be processed and delivered during the busiest week
- Dec. 16 is expected to be the busiest day for [usps.com](https://usps.com) with more than 8.5 million customers predicted to visit on that day alone | Nearly 5 million people on regular days
- Over the last five years, USPS package volume has increased by more than 2 billion – from 4 billion to 6.1 billion
- The Postal Service has nearly 229,000 vehicles. More than 8,000 new vehicles have been added to the USPS fleet in the past two years.

## Employees

### Tipping

All postal employees, including mail carriers, must comply with the Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch. Under these federal regulations, carriers are permitted to accept a gift worth \$20 or less (this includes store, restaurant or mall gift cards). However, cash and cash equivalents, such as checks or gift cards that can be used like credit cards (with Visa, MasterCard or American Express logos) must never be accepted in any amount.

### Hiring

Hiring seasonal employees is a decision based on local need. Instead of just hiring seasonally, the Postal Service is focusing its resources on hiring long-term employees and has been actively hiring year-round.

### Carriers and Dogs

The Postal Service asks customers to place their dogs in a separate room before opening the front door to accept packages from carriers. Dogs are protective in nature and have been known to jump through screen doors and squeeze through door openings. More than 5,700 carriers were attacked by dogs last year. We want everyone to get home safely each day.

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